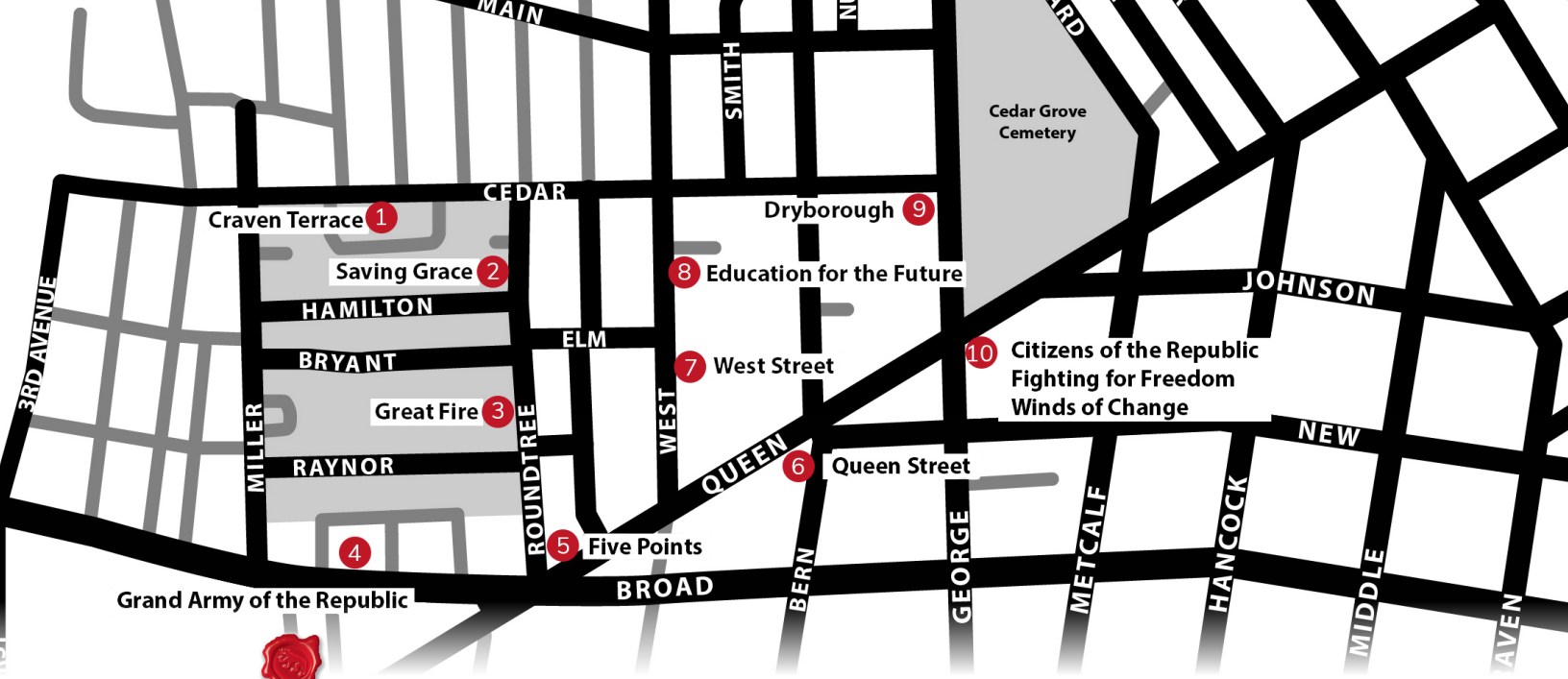

NEW BERN AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL

Part of long-term efforts to uncover New Bern's African American experience is the first installment of New Bern's African American Heritage Trail. The points of interest are located within the greater Craven Terrace/Dryborough neighborhoods. Sixteen panels at ten sites explain and interpret significant historic events, people and places that pertain to African American heritage. A self-guided tour allows visitors to explore each panel, featuring historical information, photographs and graphics.

The panels' topics and events trace to before the Civil War to Jim Crow and thereafter; little-known stories about New York Knicks' Walt Bellamy and author Alex Haley residing in New Bern are featured along the trail. The trail stops are not arranged in any specific order; the map allows visitors to browse at their leisure.

This walking tour covers a distance of approximately 1.3 miles and takes an estimated 26 minutes to complete on foot.

1 THE HISTORY OF CRAVEN TERRACE (PANELS) | *333 Cedar Street*

Taking advantage of Roosevelt's New Deal, the New Bern Housing Authority (NBHA) assisted the city in acquiring land for two new public housing projects. Dwellings in White areas (Trent Court) could house only White tenants; the same was true in African American neighborhoods (Craven Terrace). This stop features three panels about Craven Terrace: Public Housing, A New Beginning, and A Home at Craven Terrace.

2 SAVING GRACE | *709 Oak Street*

For decades leading up to the Civil War, Black ministers were banned from conducting services for fear of fomenting insurrections such as the Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831. After the Civil War, however, Northern Black missionaries saw opportunity in New Bern. This trail stop highlights the momentous movement that began in 1864, which led to the creation of several distinct Black denominations in New Bern.

3 THE GREAT FIRE | *Oak Street between Raynor and Bryant Streets*

In 1922, the face of New Bern was forever changed. Over three thousand people were displaced in a fire that raged through the African American community, decimating hundreds of structures. The fire started at the Rowland Lumber Company on the banks of the Neuse River; within minutes, the largest lumber mill in the state of North Carolina was consumed. A second fire, sparked a few hours later, converged with the first fire, sealing the fate of any wooden clapboard and shingle-roofed homes. This trail stop recalls this tragic event and its impact on New Bern.

4 GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC (TRAIL STOP) | *1046 Broad Street*

Founded in 1866, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal organization for veterans who shared common wartime experiences. Locally, a group of Black veterans formed the Beecher post, named after Colonel James Beecher, the half-brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe. This trail stop shares the story of the establishment of the Beecher post GAR, its location, and notable Black New Bernians who contributed to its success.

5 FIVE POINTS | *Near intersection of Broad, Queen, and Roundtree Streets*

The intersection of Broad, Roundtree, and Queen streets— known locally as Five Points—is recognized as New Bern's historic Western gateway. From barbers to grocers, realtors to beauticians, and landlords to retailers, the commercial area of Five Points witnessed significant growth after WWII and again after the establishment of the Craven Terrace public housing project. This trail stop features famous Black business owners of the day.

6 QUEEN STREET | *813 Queen Street*

At the turn of the twentieth century, Queen Street was recognized as an unspoken dividing line between the town's Black and White communities. The corridor from Five Points to the Neuse River was filled with homes, tenement houses, grocery stores, churches, shops, the Dixie Theatre, and New Bern's first Black-owned hotel, the Rhone Hotel - almost all catering to the Black community. Visit this trail stop to learn more about this area and Dryborough's oldest commercial structure at 813 Queen Street.

7 WEST STREET | *On West Street between Queen Street and Charmer Court*

On the western edge of Dryborough, West Street was home to important infrastructure for the New Bern Black community. The Good Shepherd Hospital was erected at 603 West Street, which later became the Good Shepherd Home for Aged. Nearby was the first Black library at 608 West Street – the West Street Colored Library. At this trail stop, learn more about this thoroughfare which witnessed the development, decline, and rebirth of the surrounding African American neighborhood.

8 EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE | *712 West Street*

Following Emancipation, the Freedmen's Bureau united with White charities and Northern missionary societies to be the first to tackle the problem of widespread Black illiteracy; due to North Carolina's education policies, however, they were impeded in their efforts. This trail stop tells the story of how Black New Bernians responded by creating new institutions led by Black administrators and Black educators. These schools reflected the common experience and shared values of the African American community.

9 DRYBOROUGH | *603 George Street*

In the decades leading up to the Civil War, the Dryborough area witnessed tremendous change. Free Black artisans, including tailors, painters, carpenters, and brick masons, along with commercial laborers, both Black and White, flocked to the area. Read more about the origins of the neighborhood and the Cedar Grove Cemetery at this trail stop.

10A CITIZENS OF THE REPUBLIC | *617 Queen Street*

Hoping to influence the administration's post-war reconstruction policies, a group of Black New Bernians were leaders in a meeting with President Abraham Lincoln. The group, led by Abraham Galloway, hoped to end slavery and gain full rights as citizens. This trail stop covers this unprecedented White House visit, the activists, and local standouts in this quest and the formation of the Equal Rights League.

10B FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM | *617 Queen Street*

By March of 1862, following the war, the African American population swelled to almost 15,000, with the majority encamped in James City. These Black refugees worked together to create aid societies, schools, independent churches, and even formed an unofficial local militia. At this trail stop, read more about "Black Soldiers in Blue" and "Corn Stalks to Rifles."

10C WINDS OF CHANGE | *617 Queen Street*

This trail stop explores the post-Civil War impact of New Bern's Black political activists. The most prominent post-war political figure was educator and attorney Congressman George H. White. Visit this trail stop to read about his famous January 29, 1901 farewell speech at the U.S. House of Representatives.